



# Seattle Human Rights Commission

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## **Resolution #13-01: Support for Reauthorization of Violence Against Women Act**

**Whereas**, all Seattle residents are born free and equal in dignity and rights; and

**Whereas**, the Seattle Human Rights Commission is committed to protecting and advocating for justice, human rights, and the equal treatment of all people who live and work in Seattle; and

**Whereas**, on December 10, 2012, Seattle officially declared itself a Human Rights City through Council Resolution Number 31420; and

**Whereas**, human safety is a fundamental human right and violence against women is a violation of human rights; and

**Whereas**, Congress failed to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in the 112th Congress; and

**Whereas**, in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the U.S. Senate passed a version of VAWA that included important protections for groups particularly affected by violence against women, such as Native Americans, immigrants, and LGBTQ communities; and

**Whereas**, in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress the U.S. House of Representatives passed a version of VAWA that left out those protections for Native Americans, immigrants, and LGBTQ communities; and

**Whereas**, in the current 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Senate is considering a nearly identical bill (S. 47) to the one it passed in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress which contains the same important protections for Native Americans, immigrants, and LGBTQ communities; and

**Whereas**, in the current 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Gwen Moore introduced the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (H.R. 11) in the House of Representatives, which is identical to the Senate bill; and

**Whereas**, protections against sexual assault and domestic violence for Native Americans, immigrants, and LGBTQ communities are required in order to guarantee the human rights of equality, safety, liberty, integrity and dignity which are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the American Declaration on Human Rights among others;

**Whereas**, in 2011 the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women recommended that the U.S. reassess its laws and policies protecting domestic violence survivors and punishing abusers, including the recognition of tribal authority to prosecute offenders contained in the current Senate bill (S. 47); and

**Whereas**, in 2011 the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (ICHR) ordered the United States to comply with its international duty to prevent violence against women in the case of *Jessica Lenahan*



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*(González) v. the United States*, through the enactment of legislation and policy reforms that do not discriminate and provide for equal protection before the law to victims of domestic violence and their children, under Article 2 of the American Declaration on Human Rights; and

**Whereas**, in 2012 the Commission joined with the Seattle Women's Commission to call for the U.S. House to pass the Senate version of VAWA and on June 27, 2012, the Commission co-sponsored a public rally with the Seattle Women's Commission to support the Senate version of VAWA; and

**Whereas**, on September 6, 2012 the Commission adopted Resolution 12-03 urging the House to pass the Senate version of VAWA,

**Now therefore be it resolved**, that the Seattle Human Rights Commission hereby calls upon the United States Congress to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act by passing legislation which does not leave out fundamental protections for Native Americans, immigrants, and LGBTQ communities in recognition of the principle that safety is a fundamental human right and violence against women is a violation of human rights; and

**Now therefore be it further resolved**, that the Seattle Human Rights Commission urges the Senate to pass S. 47 and the House to pass H.R. 11; and

**Now therefore be it finally resolved**, that should the House leadership decide against advancing H.R. 11, then in that case the Seattle Human Rights Commission urges the House to pass legislation that still contains protection for Native Americans, immigrants, and LGBTQ communities.

Adopted by the Seattle Human Rights Commission on February 1, 2013

Christopher Stearns, Chairman

Jennifer Yogi, Secretary